

**Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board**

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**DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY BOARD**

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**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY
PRACTICE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 26, 2006****Committee Members Present**

Lisa O'Connor, M.A., Chairperson
Carol Murphy, M.A.
Jennifer Hancock, M.A.

Staff Present

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer
Kathi Burns, Senior Staff Analyst
Lori Pinson, Staff Analyst
George Ritter, Legal Counsel

Board Members Absent

Diana Verdugo, M.A.
Paul Donald, M.D., Otolaryngologist

Board Members Present

Alison Grimes, Au.D.
Rebecca Binge, M.A.
Naomi Smith, Au.D.

Guests Present

Robert Powell, California Speech-Language-Hearing Association (CSHA)
Beth Lippes Inubinet, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE)

I. Call to Order

Chairperson O'Connor called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

II. Introductions

Those present introduced themselves.

III. Discuss Recent Board Communications Related to the Overlap in Professional Services between Speech-Language Pathologists and Both Educational Therapists and Behavioral Personnel

Chairperson O'Connor stated that the Committee had met previously to discuss the overlapping professional responsibilities for treating language and/or communication disorders as provided by licensed speech-language pathologists and other unlicensed

personnel, such as educational therapists and behavioral analysts. She stated that the Committee had recommended to the Board that two separate letters be sent on behalf of the Board expressing the Board's concern with the use of unlicensed and potentially under-trained personnel to provide language or communication therapy. Ms. O'Connor reported that the Board adopted the recommendation of the Committee and subsequently two Board communications were drafted and sent. The first letter was sent on September 18, 2006, to Holy Names University regarding the institution's Educational Therapy Program curriculum, wherein the Board expressed concern over coursework specifically designed to train educational therapists to administer language tests to determine the presence of an identified language disorder and, further, to develop a formalized intervention plan should a language disorder be detected. The second letter sent on September 28, 2006, to the Department of Development Services (DDS) addressed the reported misuse of applied behavioral analysis aides who have been allegedly assigned by various California regional centers to provide in-home therapy to children in need of both behavioral intervention and communication therapy.

Chairperson O'Connor reported that Ms. Del Mugnaio has received email communications from the Holy Names University Educational Therapy Program administrator acknowledging the Board's letter and committing to implementation of corrective action as deemed appropriate. Further written communication from the Holy Names program should be forthcoming and will address the Board's concerns and will document any proposed action.

Chairperson O'Connor reported that Dr. Cavagnaro, consultant for the DDS Early Start Program, phoned her in response to the Board's letter of concern. She stated that she and Ms. Del Mugnaio participated in a conference call with Dr. Cavagnaro and provided more background regarding the anecdotal claims of personnel abuses as reported to the Board. Dr. Cavagnaro was interested in the pervasiveness of the problem and inquired whether the Board could obtain more specific information in terms of actual locations and involved personnel. Chairperson O'Connor stated that both she and Ms. Del Mugnaio explained to Dr. Cavagnaro that it was unlikely that these individuals would come forward to divulge names and locations for fear of retaliation by their peers or regional center personnel. Chairperson O'Connor reported that she also discussed the Board's concern with the Tri-Counties Regional Center's reference document entitled *Recommendations for Assessment, Intervention, and Family Supports for Children with Autism* [Revised January 4, 2002], wherein the document appears to authorize substitution of a behavioral specialist for a speech-language pathologist to provide in-home speech and language work. She stated that she also discussed the critical shortage of available speech-language pathology services with Dr. Cavagnaro and reinforced the need for DDS to amend its Title 5 regulations in order to authorize the use of speech-language pathology assistants to treat children with communication issues who are served through California regional centers.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that she suggested to Dr. Cavagnaro that DDS send communication to all California regional centers reminding the administrators about appropriate personnel standards and the licensure authority in the state.

Ms. O'Connor stated that Dr. Cavagnaro had indicated that DDS would be responding to the Board in writing in the near future.

IV. Review Resource Materials Regarding the Scope of Responsibility and Appropriate Duties for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

Chairperson O'Connor stated that the Committee had determined at a previous meeting that a comprehensive packet of resource information be developed regarding the laws and regulations governing speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs) to distribute to school administrators and special education personnel encouraging schools to employ and to use them in accordance with the licensing provisions.

Ms. Del Mugnaio distributed draft SLPA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and indicated that the resource packet should include FAQs, laws and regulation excerpts, and supervision information and associated forms. She asked the Committee to review the draft FAQs and to provide feedback by November 15, 2006, via email. She indicated that she and Chairperson O'Connor will develop a cover letter for the SLPA resource packets.

Mr. Powell suggested that the Board include information regarding the upcoming regulation changes, which will provide additional avenues for bachelor's-degree holders to register as SLPAs.

Chairperson O'Connor requested that Board staff gather statistical data regarding the number of registered SLPAs residing in Northern California versus those in Southern California so that the Board has an idea of the SLPA workforce availability in the state.

Chairperson O'Connor reported that she is working with American River College in Sacramento to start a new SLPA program by fall 2007.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that, as the Board had previously expressed interest in expanding the registration criteria for bachelor's-degree holders to qualify for registration as SLPAs, she prepared a draft regulation proposal for consideration that would implement the following changes: 1) authorize the training program director of an undergraduate speech-language pathology or communication disorders program to verify the 70 clinical hours required for SLPA registration, and 2) establish a work experience alternative where bachelor's-degree applicants could apply their actual work experience performing the duties of an SLPA to the registration criteria as opposed to having to obtain formal clinical training.

The Committee discussed the proposal and asked Mr. Ritter to review the draft regulations and make any necessary changes so that the proposal could be considered by the full Board on the following day.

M/S/C: Hancock/Murphy

The Committee voted to recommend to the Board that the SLPA regulations Section 1399.170.11 be amended to: 1) authorize the training program director of an undergraduate communication disorders program to verify the formal clinical training of a bachelor's degree applicant for the purposes of qualifying for SLPA registration, and 2) authorize the Board to consider an applicant's work experience as an SLPA as an

alternative to the existing 70 hours of formal clinical training. The Committee determined that nine months of full-time work experience performing the duties of an SLPA as defined in Business and Professions Code Section 2538.1 (b)(4) should be established as the alternative registration criterion.

Chairperson O'Connor adjourned the Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer